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ABSTRACT

Training for child care center directors should involve experiences that are coherent and connected in a logical or cumulative fashion. Twelve key elements can serve as a framework for planning professional development training experiences for early childhood center directors. These elements relate to the content, structure, and delivery of training. Training should: (1) address both the management and leadership functions of the director's role; (2) be based on participants' perceived needs; (3) be problem-centered and site-specific; (4) focus on the director as change agent; (5) stress a systems perspective; (6) meet the needs of working professionals; (7) promote the professional advancement of participants; (8) promote participation that reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the field; (9) include follow-up; (10) promote cross-fertilization in the field; (11) promote active learning; and (12) promote collegiality and networking. National-Louis University has developed two training models for childcare center directors. The Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy Field-Based Program is a 20-month master's degree program specifically designed to accommodate the needs of center directors who want to expand their repertoire of management and leadership skills without interrupting their careers. The Taking Charge of Change Program involves an 8-day intensive leadership training institute during the summer and two follow-up weekend retreats during the following academic year. (A two-page description of courses is attached.) (AC)

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The Professional Development of Early Childhood Center Directors: Key Elements of Effective Training Models

by

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The Professional Development of Early Childhood Center Directors: Key Elements of Effective Training Models

Studies conducted in a variety of settings have repeatedly shown that one of the most salient predictors of overall child care program quality is the background, experience, and specialized training of the program director (Bloom, 1992; Bloom & Sheerer, 1992; Bredekamp, 1989; Epstein, 1993; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). In a number of powerful ways, directors influence the climate of their programs both as a workplace for the teaching staff and as an educational and nurturing environment for children. Given the importance of their role, it is unfortunate that current standards regulating requisite qualifications for early childhood directors do not ensure that personnel who administer programs will be well-trained. Most states do not require even a single course in the administration of early childhood programs as a prerequisite for directing a center (Morgan, Azer, Costley, Genser, Goodman, Lombardi, & McGimsey, 1993).

Since 1984, National-Louis University has offered specialized training for early childhood center directors. From a decade of experience working with directors using a variety of training formats, we have generated considerable anecdotal and empirical evidence documenting the components of effective training. This paper will provide some insight into these issues. It will first sort out some of the nuances in terminology with respect to the terms professional development and training. It will then provide an overview of the key components of effective training. Finally, it will describe two training models at NLU that focus on the professional development of early childhood center directors.

Professional Development and Training -- What Do They Mean?

It is easy in our field to get tangled in a web of confusing jargon. We casually toss around words that are open to multiple interpretations. Such is the problem with the terms *professional development* and *training.* The term professional development is particularly confusing because it is used both as a noun and a verb. As a noun, it refers to the transformational process of personal growth an individual experiences over time that involves expanding one's knowledge base and building new skills and competencies. It is, in essence, the personal change that results from reflecting on experience. As a verb, professional

development refers to the activities and experiences that individuals engage in to enhance their repertoire of professional skills. In this sense, professional development can be viewed as a synonym for training -- allocating resources, setting expectations, and providing opportunities for individuals to engage in experiences that will result in personal growth or change (i.e., professional development as a noun.)

The term *training* is also fraught with misinterpretation. Strictly speaking training refers to professional development experiences that build skills -- the "how to" that enables individuals to fulfill job responsibilities in a specific setting. When defined narrowly like this, it is usually cast in juxtaposition to the term *education* referring to those experiences that propel individuals to ask "why" and encourage the long-term transferability of knowledge and skills (VanderVen, 1985). In common parlance, however, the term *training* is usually used broadly to encompass both those experiences that provide specific information and opportunities for skill development as well as experiences that provide individuals with a broader perspective and a conceptual base for framing information and solving problems.

Lessons Learned: Key Elements of Effective Training

Training for child care center directors cannot be haphazard. Directors have extraordinarily frenetic lives and their time is too precious to waste on training experiences that do not meet their personal and professional needs. It is incumbent, then, for professional organizations and institutions of higher education that provide training to design experiences that are coherent and connected in a logical or cumulative fashion. Drawing from our experiences working with directors at NLU and the collective wisdom of others in the field, we offer twelve key elements that can serve as a framework for planning professional development training experiences for early childhood center directors. These elements relate to the content, structure, and delivery of training.

The Content of Training

Training should address both the management and leadership functions of the director's role: The repertoire of competencies needed to effectively administrate a child care center cuts across all aspects of the director's multifaceted role. Depending on the ages served, the size of the program, and the sponsorship of the center, a director wears many

hats: chief financial officer and budget analyst, facility manager, staff supervisor and staff developer, public relations coordinator, community liaison, curriculum specialist, fundraiser, nurse, and nutritionist. Training must equip directors to effectively handle each of these roles.

Successfully administrating a child care center demands that directors attend to both management and leadership issues. While these two functions overlap -- most managers exhibit some leadership skills, and most leaders on occasion find themselves managing -- they are not the same (Gardner, 1989). Management issues typically focus on specific tasks that need to be done such as balancing the budget or planning a fundraising event. They involve skills such as timing, planning, coordinating, and organizing. Covey (1991) states that management usually involves doing things efficiently. Leadership, on the other hand, involves broader more abstract skills such as envisioning goals, affirming values, motivating, and achieving a unity of purpose. Many organizational theorists refer to leadership as doing things effectively.

This distinction between management and leadership presents a special problem for trainers. Management issues lend themselves nicely to short-term training; they are focused and skill-based. Management training can be easily packaged and lends itself to clean, precise methods of evaluation. Leadership training is messier and takes longer because it involves fundamental changes in the way people view their role and the overarching principles that guide their behavior. Leadership training is not easily packaged and does not lend itself to clean, precise methods of evaluation. The professional development of early childhood directors must provide a delicate balance of both management and leadership training.

Training should be based on participants' perceived needs: Early childhood educators are well-versed in the importance of developmentally appropriate experiences for young children. But when it comes to training adults, cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all training experiences are often the norm (Vartuli & Fyfe, 1993). This is a tragic oversight because directors vary considerably in their level of knowledge and skill. Adults learn best the things they feel a need to learn and forget and/or do not use knowledge that is not seen as relevant to their particular needs (Hawley, 1989). Assessing where each director is on the continuum of competence should be a precursor to all training regardless of content area. An effective needs assessment need not be elaborate, but it should include an assessment of problems and concerns that directors encounter in their daily practice (Johnson, 1984; Matthews, 1993).

Training should be problem-centered and site-specific: One of the frustrations that many adult learners encounter in training is the inevitable gap between the theoretical ideas they encounter in their studies and their ability to apply these ideas in their work. Successful training models are built on the premise that immediate application of new learning to real life situations reinforces what is learned. Adult learners do not comprise a captive audience; they tend to be more impatient in the pursuit of learning objectives; they have less tolerance for "busy work" which does not have immediate and direct application to their objectives. If training is to be effective, the examples used during training should relate to the real issues and concerns that participants face in their work settings. Training cannot focus on theory alone; rather, it must weave theory into the idiosyncratic issues that daily confront directors in their professional roles. Theory and knowledge should be used to enlighten and enlarge experience. Case studies, program improvement plans, and action research are but three of the instructional strategies that can be used to make these practical connections.

Training should focus on the director as change agent: Change and child care administration go hand in hand. Daily, directors are confronted with issues and concerns that need attention. Training should help directors understand that quality is a moving target, that change is continuous, and that change provides opportunities for growth. Helping directors define their role as one of change agent is crucial to instilling norms of continuous improvement in programs. Directors need to build a vision for change, serve as the catalyst for change, create a conducive climate for change, and provide the resources and encouragement that are necessary to implement change in healthy and constructive ways. This does not happen by happenstance. Being exposed to different models of change and having opportunities to build the skills to make the change process successful is essential to effective training for center directors (Bloom, Sheerer, & Britz, 1991; Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, (1993).

Training should stress a systems perspective: It is easy in child care administration for directors to view the nettlesome problems that occur in the everyday life of their programs as isolated events that need to be solved. Such a narrow perspective can hamper their ability to respond to situations appropriately. Child care centers are organizations, and as such they are complex social systems. Becoming an effective director necessitates taking a broader, systems view of programs and understanding the delicate interplay between different components of the system. Part of that perspective is an awareness and appreciation of the

external environment. Child care centers do not exist in a vacuum; they are influenced by funding and regulatory agencies, the current social and political climate, professional organizations, and a host of other external influences that act as both opportunities and constraints to program effectiveness. The formal and informal structure of the program, key stakeholders, organizational processes, and the unique culture of the setting all interrelate to impact program outcomes (Bloom, Sheerer, & Britz, 1991). This broader perspective of how organizations function allows directors to look at the whole as well as the parts and view their centers as true ecosystems.

The Structure of Training

Training should meet the needs of working professionals: Child care center directors are busy people often juggling several concomitant roles. Most are married, have families, and multiple commitments outside the workplace. Not all working professionals can commit the time needed to pursue an advanced degree. Training models that utilize different formats including short-term and long-term training as well as day, evening, and weekend options for class schedules are essential if the needs of directors are to be met (Morgan, et al., 1993). In addition, logistical considerations regarding the location of training, the registration process, and the distribution of books and materials should be as convenient as possible for participants.

Training should promote the professional advancement of participants: The field of early childhood is replete with examples of child care center directors who have accumulated hundreds of hours of in-service training but still lack a college degree. While isolated training experiences such as in-service workshops offered by sponsoring agencies are valuable in the short run in building participants' skills and competency on the job, in the long-run they may be undermining the professional advancement of these individuals. This is because most in-service training is fragmented and does not award college credit. The result is two-fold; a lack of coherence in the content of training and a lack of career mobility that comes with a formal degree. Whenever possible training should be tied to the awarding of college credit and support the horizontal and vertical advancement of participants on the early childhood career lattice (NAEYC, 1994).

Training should promote participation that reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the field: The preliminary findings of a research conducted by the National Black Child Development Institute (1994) reveals a disturbing underrepresentation of African Americans in leadership roles in early childhood education. This includes center directors. Ensuring diversity in the ranks of center directors is essential to guaranteeing educational equity for America's children and reversing low levels of educational achievement of children from racial and ethnic minorities. In its framework for early childhood professional development, NAEYC states that barriers such as a lack of financial resources as well as institutional racism and classism must be challenged and removed (NAEYC, 1994). Training programs sponsored by institutions of higher education, professional organizations, or child care agencies must take aggressive steps to redress this imbalance. Mentor training programs and financial assistance through scholarships and loan forgiveness programs are essential. In addition, training may need to be structured to accommodate more individualized support in the way of counseling and academic tutoring. This may help ensure both higher recruitment into training opportunities and higher completion rates.

Training should include follow-up: Research provides strong evidence that one-time workshops on broad, global topics have little lasting impact on behavior (AACTE, 1986; Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987). In summarizing the research conducted on the High/Scope Training of Trainers programs, Epstein (1993) underscores the importance of follow-up. She states that the real questions tend to surface when participants attempt to implement what they have learned. With no forum for addressing their questions, individuals do not receive the help they need to apply the lessons learned in the training. Follow-up involves providing opportunities to try out new behaviors in a non-threatening climate. Follow-up can involve on-site coaching, journal writing, practicum experiences, or specific field assignments that help individuals integrate newly acquired knowledge into their professional repertoire of skills and competencies. Planning the training so that it is spread out over many months helps promote adaptation and problem solving. It also helps to highlight the progression of skills over time (Epstein, 1993).

Training should promote cross-fertilization in the field: The field of early childhood education has become increasing specialized in recent years. There are now early childhood

professionals who will spend their entire adult careers working for one type of program (e.g. Head Start, Military child care, at-risk prekindergarten) or in one specialized role (infant-toddler educator, bilingual specialist). While there are benefits to this trend, there are also problems that can arise. For example, much of the polarizing dialogue evident in the field between the for-profit and nonprofit sectors or between half-day preschools and day care programs can be directly attributed to the tunnel vision that comes form working exclusively in one type of program. The resulting divisiveness has clearly prevented early childhood educators from presenting a united front on critical legislative and policy issues in recent years.

The diverse, often conflicting funding and reporting requirements of sponsoring agencies have resulted in both gaps in service and costly and unnecessary duplication of services. Because of funding restrictions, training that is provided by sponsoring agencies such as Head Start usually tends to focus on the specific concerns of that program (e.g., Head Start Performance Standards). While this kind of focused training is important, it often has the unintended consequence of reinforcing barriers and differences between different types of programs. Training is needed that brings together individuals from different types of programs in order to generate a broader perspective of the field, an appreciation of differences, and the cross-fertilization of ideas that can result in a fresh approach to problem solving and interagency cooperation and collaboration.

The Delivery of Training

Training should promote active learning: We know from the wealth of research on learning styles that how individuals learn is strongly influenced by emotional, biological, and psychological factors. When designing programs for adults, all factors that may potentially impinge on learning need to considered. For example, adult learners are likely to be more rigid in their thinking. Unfreezing old patterns of behavior takes time. Adult learners require more and better light for study; they are easily distracted by external temperature changes in the learning environment; and they may be more fatigued when they attend training. Adult learners need to take an active rather than a passive role in structuring their own learning experiences. They need to be provided with the opportunity to learn via multiple modes of instruction (e.g., lecture, small group exercises, media, independent work, roleplaying). Respecting differing learning styles also means structuring assignments so participants can demonstrate competence in more than just one way. Adult learners also need to see the

relationship between how they are evaluated and the objectives of instruction and receive immediate feedback about performance.

Because adult learners have had more experience from which to draw on, it is crucial that training embrace what Sadler and Whimbey (19885) refer to as a holistic approach, encouraging individuals to development the awareness and ability to monitor their own thought processes. This metacognitive ability to reflect upon experience as directors wrestle with new ideas and connections is crucial to real understanding of theory and to developing habitual patterns of higher order thought. Simply put, the more individuals understand about how they learn, the better learners they will be.

Consistent with adult learning theory, the role of the trainer should be that of "facilitator." Where the traditional instructor frequently presumes the ignorance of students, a facilitator is more concerned with helping individuals take responsibility for their own professional growth. Essential to this focus is helping directors take an active role in structuring relevant learning experiences that are consistent with their career aspirations. This approach promotes self-awareness, an integral part of adult learning. Hawley (1989) reminds us, however, that personal experience typically is not a good source of learning unless the experience is evaluated systematically and objectively and/or shared with others who assume some responsibility for facilitating learning. Unguided practice in using new skills can often result in learning inappropriate applications of the skills. Thus coached practice is important.

Training should promote collegiality and networking: The professional role of early childhood directors is often a lonely one, so it is important when designing training experiences to weave in ample opportunities for collegial support. When training is provided to an intact cluster group over a period of time, for example, there are powerful dynamics that can develop. The collegial model creates an atmosphere of mutual trust that encourages the sharing of ideas and collaborative learning. Instructional activities can also be designed to foster cooperation and the exchange of ideas and insights. The goal, of course, is to ensure that each training session exemplifies a model of staff development that participants can incorporate into their own work environments.

NLU Training Models for Early Childhood Center Directors

One of the most pressing issues facing the field of early childhood is that current licensing standards do not reflect the educational expertise needed to effectively administrate an early childhood program. Consequently, in most states there are many individuals who are directing early childhood programs who do not yet have a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or child development let alone the post baccalaureate training recommended by NAEYC (1991) to administrate a center. Current shortages in the labor pool and the overall depressed salaries in the field make this situation difficult to reverse. This situation has created a special dilemma for institutions of higher education that want to provide professional development opportunities specifically for center directors. Do they meet the immediate demands of the field and provide specialized training for directors who do not yet have their baccalaureate degree knowing they may be undermining the efforts of the profession to improve its overall status? At NLU, we have struggled with this dilemma for ten years. We have made the difficult decision to take the long view and focus our training efforts at the post baccalaureate level. The following is a description of two training models: a 20-month field-based master's degree program and a one-year field experience program that includes a week-long residential institute and weekend retreats.

The Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy Field-Based Program

In 1984, National-Louis University launched a field-based master's degree program specifically designed to accommodate the needs of center directors and other potential leaders in the field of early childhood who wanted to expand their repertoire of management and leadership skills without interrupting their careers. The Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy Field-Based Program takes an interdisciplinary approach to academic study and professional development. An integral goal of the program is to build leadership competencies in the work environment. Thus, the field setting serves as a laboratory for professional growth while academic coursework provides the foundation for educational inquiry.

The Leadership and Advocacy Field-Based Program is unique from the college's other early childhood graduate programs both in its content and the way in which it is implemented. A cluster group is formed whenever 12 or more students wish to begin the program at a site that is convenient to their home or work. Partial scholarships are available for minority

students who are directors of child care programs. This intact group meets for 77 class sessions over three terms of about 30 weeks each. A core instructor and a research instructor follow the progress of the group through their entire program. They are assisted by additional faculty with expertise in specialized areas of early childhood education. Sessions are four hours in length and are conducted in a seminar-like atmosphere. They are generally varied in format including some lecture and formal presentations by instructors, whole group discussions, small group experiences, videotaping, or role playing exercises. Field assignments and occasional visits to the work site by the instructor supplement the class sessions.

The program includes 11 courses (see attachment) for a total of 32 semester hours of graduate credit. The structural model of an intact group allows for greater flexibility in the ways in which individual courses are taught. Instead of moving students through eleven separate discrete courses in a sequential fashion, the content in each term is integrated allowing ideas, concepts, theories, and applications discussed in one course to be continually related to the content of other courses. The core instructor provides the continuity of experience and the integration of ideas.

The overall goal of the Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy Program is to build management and leadership competencies in the work environment. Specific objectives relating to outcomes and competencies can be clustered under five general areas. These include: child development and early childhood programming; organizational theory, leadership, and program administration; parent and community relations; public policy and advocacy; and research and technology.

The general progression of the curriculum is from global to specific. For example, Term I provides an overview of child development and organizational theory as it relates to early childhood education and traces the underlying philosophical and social themes influencing the development of programs. Selected topics focus on patterns of leadership behavior, the dynamics of group interaction, assessing organizational climate, and strategies for staff development.

Term II focuses more narrowly on specific issues and competencies needed for program implementation. It surveys the legal and fiscal issues involved in operating programs. Various program models are examined along with the standards, licensing guidelines, and the policies and procedures that govern their operation. This term also provides an in-depth study of different curricular models as they relate to recent research on developmentally appropriate practices.

Term III provides an integrated study of the role of public policy as it affects young children and their families. Students become familiar with existing political, regulatory, and legislative processes as they relate to child advocacy issues. Emphasis is given to the development of skills needed to advocate on behalf of children and families. Topics also cover the fundamentals of marketing, public relations, and the importance of interagency collaboration and networking in the community. In addition, students learn how to evaluate potential funding sources and develop skills needed for writing grant proposals.

Throughout the entire program, emphasis is given to the integration of field experiences and the development of skills for educational research. Directors have an opportunity to be actively involved in applied research. They each identify an issue relevant to their professional needs and design a research study around that issue. Their project thus serves as a catalyst, blending theory and experiential learning. In the process they become not only consumers of research who study and apply the work of others, but also researchers themselves creating knowledge and learning to think critically about educational ideas and practices.

To date, over 350 individuals have graduated from this program. Research conducted on the effectiveness of this training model (Bloom & Sheerer, 1992) found positive effects in a number of areas for directors who completed the training. Self-report feedback from participants indicated a statistically significant increase in their perceived level of knowledge and skill. Posttest observations of classroom quality revealed a significant improvement in the quality of classroom teaching practices in their centers compared to a comparison group of directors not receiving training. A pretest-posttest comparison of organizational climate showed a significant improvement in clarity of program policies, degree of program innovativeness, opportunities for professional growth, and staff's level of perceived decision-making influence.

Taking Charge of Change **-- Early Childhood Management and Leadership Training**

Because many directors do not have the time nor the financial resources to pursue a full master's degree, NLU launched a shorter version of early childhood management and leadership training in 1993. This training is funded by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and several private foundations. Priority is given to directors of licensed centers with 25% or more of their enrollment consisting of publicly funded children. The directors selected for this training reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the early childhood profession and work in early childhood programs geographically distributed throughout Illinois, including both urban and rural areas. The first cohort of 25 directors began their training the summer of 1993. The second cohort will begin their training the summer of 1994.

Selection of participants is based on the following criteria: 1) individuals who have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the quality of care and education provided for young children; 2) individuals who have expressed an interest in upgrading their programs to conform with the quality criteria set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children; 3) individuals who have demonstrated strong leadership potential; and 4) individuals who are in positions to effect organizational and systemic change.

The participants for each cohort of training attend an eight-day intensive leadership training institute during the summer and two weekend retreats during the following academic year while they engage in follow-up field experiences. Thus each participant receives approximately 95 hours of small and large group instruction and 20 hours of individual feedback/conference time from their field supervisors and mentors. At the culmination of the one-year training cycle, participants receive 6 semester hours of graduate credit.

The summer institute titled *Taking Charge of Change* focuses on the nature of individual, organizational, and systemic change and the early childhood leader's role as change agent. A comprehensive, integrated model for improving the quality of their early childhood programs is presented. Topics address issues related to staff development, group dynamics, organizational assessment, and criteria and procedures for pursuing NAEYC center accreditation. Emphasis is given to the leadership and advocacy skills needed to promote

intra-agency and interagency collaboration and cooperation. Videotaping is used to assist participants in refining their presentation and advocacy skills.

Prior to the summer institute, each participant is interviewed and an in-depth needs assessment is conducted. The case studies used during training are drawn from the critical incident scenarios and the program profiles that participants complete as part of the needs assessment interviews. The case studies developed draw on both generic themes that cut across different types of programs and from specific examples that highlight unique issues inherent to individual programs.

In addition, an organizational climate assessment and a program observation are conducted for those directors who want a Work Environment Profile and a Classroom Quality Profile. These profiles are used as an instructional tool to guide program improvement efforts and as baseline data to document the overall effectiveness of the training.

The field experience component of the training is premised on the belief that immediate application of new learning to real life situations reinforces what is learned. The training model emphasizes the links between, theory, research, and practice in a useful and pragmatic way. It rests on the assumption that when individuals engage in identifying and answering their most pressing questions, not only do they find important solutions, but their professional competence is enhanced and their commitment to their jobs is strengthened.

During their supervised field experience, participants have an opportunity to implement a Program Improvement Plan and to document the results of their efforts in an oral presentation and written report. The field supervisor and mentors (selected from the previous cohort of leadership training graduates) provide technical assistance as needed to implement the Program Improvement Plan. Participants also learn how to use electronic networking to facilitate the exchange of information, resources, and expertise.

The logistics of training encourage collegial support and networking. The provision of housing for the summer institute and weekend retreats make it possible for participants from rural areas of the state to take part. Training for the summer institute is held on the Evanston campus of National-Louis University. The retreats are held at hotels or conference centers in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Specific outcomes and competencies for this model of early childhood management and leadership training include:

- Become familiar with the concepts of social systems theory and how they apply to different early childhood settings.
- Utilize relevant theories related to organizational climate, group processes, and communication networks in the identification and diagnosis of different organizational problems.
- Apply the principles of Force-Field Analysis in generating viable change strategies and an action plan for organizational improvement.
- Develop group participant and observer skills including active listening and giving and receiving feedback.
- Develop an awareness of one's leadership style and how to apply or adapt that style as situationally appropriate.
- Apply the concepts of Total Quality Management to early childhood program management.
- Implement individual and organizational strategies to reduce job stress and burnout.
- Implement NAEYC center accreditation standards for high quality programming.
- Apply the concepts of adult life and career stage development to the supervisory role of the administrator.
- Analyze the objectives and functions of staff development and be able to implement an individualized professional development plan for employees.
- Evaluate existing personnel policies and practices as they relate to employee performance appraisal.
- Become knowledgeable about different legal issues and the role of risk management in the operation of child care programs.
- Become knowledgeable about the diversity of family service and child care delivery systems in Illinois and develop strategies for establishing interagency cooperation to effect systemic change.
- Become proficient at using the computer for electronic networking.

Summary

This paper has highlighted some of the central issues relating to the professional development of child care center directors and suggested twelve key elements of effective training. Certainly there many different ways these elements can be operationalized in successful training models. This paper has described two models offered by National-Louis University. Each model has its merits and deficiencies. The master's degree program provides a very comprehensive study of the theoretical and practical issues involved in establishing and administering early childhood programs. The program is only offered in the Chicago metropolitan area, however, and requires a substantial time commitment. The *Taking Charge of Change* early childhood management and leadership training accommodates directors from rural regions of the state who have limited access to training. This program is also very affordable since it is largely funded by outside grants. It is more limited in scope, however, and does not ensure the same degree of personal or professional growth that a full master's degree ensures.

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Master of Education Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy

TERM I

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION — FND503

Explores the historical antecedents and underlying philosophical and social forces which lead to the development of primary, kindergarten, nursery schools, day care, and family service programs. Provides an overview of the theoretical rationale of different program models and examines the role and professional status of the early childhood educator.

CONTEMPORARY SURVEY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT — EPS500

Explores current research and major theoretical positions in child development. Course content includes the study of children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical, language, moral, and perceptual development with special emphasis placed on under-standing the integration of these developmental processes in normal child development. Students learn to critique child development research and use the resources of the library and different computerized data bases to write a review of the literature on a selected topic. Includes opportunities to apply child development concepts to practical experiences in educational settings.

GROUP DYNAMICS AND LEADERSHIP APPLICATIONS — EPS525

Analyzes social interaction in groups. Using Systems Theory as an integrating paradigm, this course is designed to deepen awareness of how the student affects and is affected by others in different group situations. Personal assessment is continuous throughout the course as different ways of working effectively in groups as both leader and group member are examined. Includes an analysis of leadership style and principles of organizational climate as they relate to the organizational context of early childhood education. Provides opportunities to apply the concepts of group dynamics and models of leadership in educational settings.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPERVISION AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT — ECE525

Focuses on the human relations side of administration in early chiidhood programs. Analyzes the objectives and functions of supervision and presents guidelines for recruiting, hiring, training, and evaluating personnel. Examines different conceptual models for understanding job satisfaction and the career stages through which teachers progress. Explores various individual and organizational strategies for reducing stress and promoting optimal performance. Provides opportunities to apply models of supervision and staff development in educational settings.

TERM II

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS ECE513

Provides an overview of organizational policies and procedures as they relate to the administration of educational programs for young children from birth to eight years of age. Evaluates current licensing standards, laws, and regulations regarding health, safety, and nutrition. Examines the use of space and equipment in meeting program goals. Emphasis is given to the development of financial management skills and program evaluation skills as they relate to overall program quality. Includes opportunities to apply key administrative/management concepts to practical experiences in the field.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM ECE512

Acquaints students with the basic concepts and principles of the early childhood curriculum. Current research on different curricular models and teaching strategies are analyzed as they relate to developmentally appropriate experiences for children from birth through age eight. The basics of cultural diversity, teaching multi- and bilingual children, along with serving the needs of exceptional children, are included. Emphasis is given to the role of screening and assessment in curriculum planning and evaluating student outcomes. Includes opportunities to implement and evaluate different teaching methodologies and curricular models in their respective educational settings.

CHILD, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ECE510

Presents an ecological model for studying family systems and different cultural patterns of childrearing. Examines some of the social, economic, and technological factors which impact upon the family. Evaluates existing family support services in the community with respect to day care, infant care, and programs for children with special needs. Examines alternative program models including employer-sponsored programs, resource and referral, and family day care homes. Field experiences provide opportunities to implement educational practices that strengthen the family-school partnership.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH I: DESIGN ESR512

Provides an overview of the structure of educational research, construction of problem statements and hypotheses, utilization of resources, research design and methodology. Students develop research proposals related to their own classroom or professional work environment and begin data collection. Guidance in the use of library resources and various bibliographic tools to aid in conducting the research project is offered.

TERM III

FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND GRANTS WRITING ECE524

Introduces the fundamentals of promoting and maintaining a positive public image in the community to prospective donors, supporters, and clients. Provides an overview of potential income sources as well as an overview of effective fundraising strategies. Methods for conducting ongoing needs assessment and writing grant proposals is covered. Includes opportunities to gain proficiency in using public relations and grants writing skills in different educational organizations.

SOCIAL POLICIES AND ADVOCACY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ECE514

Provides an integrated study of the role of public policy with respect to services for young children and their families. Students evaluate various coalition-building strategies and analyze existing political, regulatory, and legislative processes as they relate to children's issues. Emphasis is on field experiences that help students develop effective advocacy skills to influence social policy at the local, state, and federal levels.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH II: APPLICATION ESR513

Provides the research tools needed to organize, analyze, and present qualitative and quantitative data. Includes an overview of descriptive and inferential statistics. Implications of educational research for professional practice in different educational settings is an integral part of this course.

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